



Town of Abington

Board of Selectmen

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Minutes
Board of Selectmen
January 27, 2025
Cotter Room
6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Kevin Donovan, Chair, Suzanne Djusberg, Roger Woods, Paul Bunker, Amanda Zompetti, Scott Lambiase, Town Manager

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence: Elizabeth “Betty” Keefe, a member of the Council on Aging and a member of the Friends of the Elderly Board.

Announcements:

- The Center School RFP’s are due on January 29th. Hopefully, we will get some responses and have the developer attend the next Selectmen’s meeting to show what is being planned.
 - The Annual Town Report is due Friday, January 31st. After that, Mr. Donovan, the Town Manager and a staff committee will go over the town reports. He reminded the departments to please get their reports in, or they may not be included.
 - The first phase of the Fire/DPW project has begun. The salt shed was permitted and roadway construction. General bids will be due back about April 2nd, with construction to begin the end of May, beginning of June, to be completed in about 18 months. The Town Manager sent letters to neighbors around the North School that the DPW will be relocating to the North School for the interim while the DPW facility will be constructed.
 - Town election deadline for nomination papers is March 10th. The Town Clerk has asked anyone who does not plan to seek re-election in this year’s election, to please notify her. The positions open on the ballot are Selectman, Assessor, Board of Health, Sewer Commissioner, School Committee, Library Trustee, unexpired term for Water Commissioner, unexpired term Housing Authority, Planning Board. If interested, please see the Town Clerk. You have until March 10th to file papers.
 - There is a public planning meeting on February 11th at 6 p.m. at Martin’s Restaurant to discuss the recent downtown improvement grant.
 - Reminder that the Board of Selectmen is sponsoring a retiree appreciation luncheon for all former Abington town and school employees on April 4th. The deadline to RSVP is February 14th. It will be a complimentary luncheon with free raffles and hopefully, it will be a yearly event.
1. Former Whitman Selectman Richard S. Rosen reported on the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of the Town of South Abington. Mr. Donovan gave a brief history of the secession from Abington to what is now Rockland and Whitman and introduced Richard Rosen. Whitman will be

celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2026, starting on April 5th and ending on June 22nd with a huge parade. The kickoff dinner is April 5th at the Spellman Center followed by many fun events, rededicating the Memorial Arch next to the Fire Station. They are looking for the Selectmen to come to the kickoff dinner and would like the Chairman to put together a contingent from Abington for the parade. Mr. Donovan and the Town Moderator will put together a contingent from Abington assisted by the Selectmen.

Public Hearing:

6:05 P.M. Request for a transfer of a Class 11 license from ABC Tech Squad and a new Used Article and Pawn Broker License for Auto Avenue LLC, 201 N. Quincy Street, Robert Bretoux, Manager. Motion by Mr. Woods to open the hearing, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous. Mr. Bretoux is 22 years old and has worked in a car dealership since he was 15. He worked in the pawn shop for six years. The Board pointed out there are a lot of cars on the lot. Police Chief Bonney – photos have to be taken of items and ID's in the pawn shop, and they can check whenever they want as far as the pawn shop and can demand to see the records whenever they want. There has to be a significant amount of time before an item can be resold. Mr. Bretoux understood. Mr. Donovan – can't vote on the class 11 with too many cars. Mr. Bretoux – there are 19 cars there now, but he can get it down within two weeks. Motion by Mr. Woods to continue the hearing for two weeks. The count needs to come down. He needs to show on a plot plan which cars are his and which ones are for the junkyard. Seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous

Continued Show Cause Hearing:

J. D. Variety, Manjulaben Patel, 201 N. Quincy Street. The Building Inspector has been out there. Progress is being made. Motion by Mr. Woods to close the hearing with no finding, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.

2. Minutes: January 13, 2025. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.
3. Report on Potential Commercial Development at Southfield formerly the NAS-South Weymouth. Mr. Donovan – there was a meeting with Abington Town Manager, Rockland Town Administrator and the Joint Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works. The developer is negotiating with commercial parties that would be low end water users, but they need water to close the deal. If they don't, those parties would go to Weymouth. They identified a couple of possibilities for the engineers to look into. One of them is the Fox's Pitt and Rocket and the other is the Myers Avenue well to see if through engineering and additional upgrades, that additional yields could be made that would allow additional water to come in for a short period of time. The MEPA certification requires the MWRA be connected to the base. There are talks going on now with the Administrator to bring the pipe down to the South Shore. That hasn't been completed yet, but that would be a seven year process. Any water we could identify over and above what we have would only be for a short period of time and that water would be released to both communities because the MWRA would be able to hook up for commercial ventures.

Mr. Donovan informed everyone he wants to keep this on the agenda and talk about it at each meeting and get progress reports so that we keep an eye on it and try to entice commercial development. We have an obligation to go forward in that vein and look everywhere for that. Next week the engineers and the Town Planners from Rockland and Abington are going to sit down with the Joint Water Works and look at it from an engineering standpoint and then come back to the general committee which is made up of the Town Manager of Abington, the Town Administrator of Rockland, Sewer and Highway Superintendent, Rockland, DPW Director,

Abington, members of the Southfield Redevelopment Authority, the developer and his engineers, to see where we stand, and report back to the larger group.

Ms. Zompetti – we’re looking to engineer water to cover until water gets here? Correct. If we wait seven years, all the commercial development will go to Weymouth. Mr. Woods – wanted to thank the Chairwoman of the Water Board for being there, Superintendent Krystal Cameron and Assistant Superintendent Tom Royal. They understood what the Board was trying to do, which is to capture as much of the commercial interest that comes at the beginning of a development as we can, so we don’t lose it to another town.

4. Request from Abington St. Patrick’s Day Parade Committee to use the parking lots at Center and North Schools for line up and parking buses for the 44th Annual Abington St. Patrick’s Day Parade on March 16th. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.
5. Vote to change DBA from Webster Timber Lanes to Luci’s Pizza Bar, 460 Bedford Street. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve, seconded by Mr. Bunker, unanimous.
6. Report on the results of the District Wide Election for the new Vocational High School and possible vote to include a debt exclusion question on the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election. There were 729 “yes” votes, 204 “no” votes. It passed in all nine towns. Motion by Mr. Woods to submit a Warrant Article for the Annual Town Meeting for appropriation of approximately \$22M from the Regional School Committee and authorize a debt exclusion question on the ballot for the Annual Town Election, seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous. We will get the verbiage from Superintendent Tom Hickey’s bond counsel
7. Town Manager Report on FY26 Budget Process. The Governor’s bill has been submitted. It works out to be about a 1.6% increase, a little over \$200,000 increase between unrestricted government aid and Chapter 70 school aid. Obviously, the House and the Senate will have their versions and there will be some increases, but he doesn’t anticipate they will be very significant. We still have a budget gap of \$1.2+M and are still working on those costs and bringing them down to zero.

They are still going forward with the trash plan to take trash out of the budget and put it into the Enterprise Account. He will be meeting with the School Committee Tuesday night to lay out that plan to them, and eventually to the Finance Committee and Board of Health, all of which have been working to get with members of this Board to try to put up a plan that is fiscally responsible. Just since 2018, the trash line item has gone up 56% and that is just not sustainable. Most communities around us have taken it out of their budgets sometime ago. In 1991 and 2008 there were Prop 2 ½ overrides to help fund waste removal. We don’t want to do that. We have looked at a four-year plan to transition this. In year one, we would fund this process entirely with surplus funds or Free Cash; year two, we would implement it with 50% from Free Cash and a bill to the homeowner for an annual fee of \$175. Nothing would change – we would still have curbside pickup; the process will be the same. In year three, there will be a slight increase for the homeowner to \$262. In year four, it will go up to \$350. There is a plan that will allow for abatement for seniors or those who are living alone or those who can show they actually don’t have very much trash.

We are one of the last communities in the region to do this. We found that the communities that have done this, the prices have been pretty stable over those years, and it encourages people to use less or conserve more. This will be presented at Town Meeting to decide whether we want to do this or not. Mr. Donovan – we are going to have an informational session on March 19th at the

High School. It is something we can't escape. When we first started separating trash, we were hopeful we would save money by recycling, but it is something that we have to address. It will be a phased-in operation. We will have all the cost estimates and information. There are some communities that don't offer trash pick-up. It costs Hanson homeowners \$650. We want to get the information out, so people are aware before Town Meeting.

Motion by Mr. Woods to go into EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 30A, section 21 (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining to wit; Massachusetts Coalition of Police, Local 476, and to reconvene, seconded by Mr. Bunker. Roll call vote: Ms. Zompetti, yes; Mr. Bunker, yes; Mr. Woods, yes; Ms. Djusberg, yes; Mr. Donovan, yes.

Reconvened: Mr. Donovan – agreement was reached on the Police contract for COLA of 2% first year, 2.5% second year, 2.9% third year. We have a very good force, and we have to be mindful of that for retention rates. The Board felt this was a fair contract between the Town and the Union. It will go to Town Meeting for funding. Motion by Mr. Woods to approve the Police contract, seconded by Mr. Bunker. Roll call vote: Ms. Zompetti, yes; Mr. Bunker, yes; Mr. Woods, yes; Ms. Djusberg; Mr. Donovan, yes.

Motion by Mr. Woods to adjourn at 6:40 p.m., seconded by Ms. Djusberg, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hurst